

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-21 (Canceled).

22 (Currently Amended). An apparatus comprising:
 a substrate;
 a barrier layer over said substrate;
 a trench etched into said substrate through said barrier layer;
 a dielectric in said trench, said dielectric having a first ~~etch-rate~~ polish; and
 a plurality of ions implanted into said dielectric and said barrier layer, said
substrate being substantially free of said ions, said implanted dielectric having ~~an etch-rate~~ a
polish higher than said first ~~etch-rate~~ polish.

23 (Previously Presented). The apparatus of claim 22 wherein the dielectric comprises
silicon oxide.

24 (Previously Presented). The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said dielectric is
damaged by said implanted ions.

25 (Previously Presented). The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said barrier layer is
formed of silicon nitride.

26 (Previously Presented). The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said ions are selected
from the group consisting of silicon, carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen.

27 (Previously Presented). The apparatus of claim 22 wherein the upper surface of said
barrier layer and said dielectric are coplanar.